mobile inSite

news, issues and science on mobile telecommunications deployment

AMTA
Australian
Mobile Telecommunications
Association

Winter 2007 – In this issue

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Editorial

The past few months have been hectic in the mobile phone base station deployment scene, as demonstrated by the diverse range of topics represented in this edition of *Mobile InSite*.

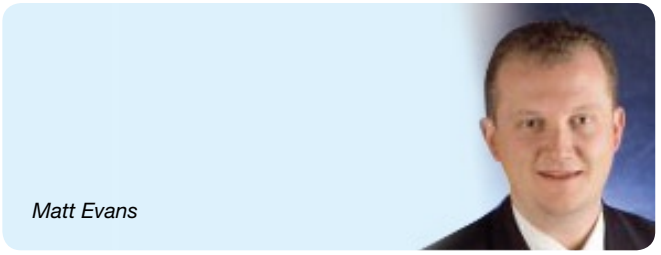
Of most significance is the introduction of the new Federal Health Department report, which is designed to ensure information about base stations and their emission levels is available in a clear and easily understood format.

In addition, we have provided a guide on how to locate mobile phone base stations in your community. The Mobile Carriers Forum's Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA) is a regularly updated database of all the base stations in Australia. Please make sure to note down the website and our seven easy steps for locating a base station near you.

Another major development in the deployment world was the South Australian Supreme Court ruling on the tests to be applied in determining whether to grant consent for a mobile phone tower. The Honourable Chief Justice Doyle dismissed the South Australian Development Assessment Commission's (DAC) appeal, siding with the original decision made by the South Australian Environment, Resources and Development Court. The court ruled that a planning authority is not required to assess the value or need of the 3G services to be provided by a base station.

While the decision went our way, we emphasize that the industry is committed to working with local Councils to strike a balance between the provision of an essential service and balancing the needs of the local community.

Other articles of interest in this edition include the development of the Queensland Telecommunications Code and the new ACRBR home measurement study. We have also covered some of the hot topics internationally, including an overview of the Bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and the release of the much anticipated expert group report on the health effects of mobile phone technology from the Irish Government.


Matt Evans

For more information on these topics please visit the website of the Mobile Carriers Forum, which is a division of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) the peak industry body for the telecommunications industry. The MCF is a specialised AMTA Forum that deals specifically with social, environmental, policy and regulatory issues related to the deployment and operation of mobile phone networks. Its members are: Hutchison, Optus, Telstra and Vodafone.

WEBSITE LINK

Matt Evans
MCF Program Manager

Mobile phone base stations emission reports now more detailed

Federal Health Department reports on radiation emission levels of new or upgraded mobile phone base stations are now required to be more detailed.

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), a agency of the Federal Health Department, has updated the requirements for Electromagnetic Emission (EME) reports that must be prepared for by carriers for all new or upgrades to existing base stations.

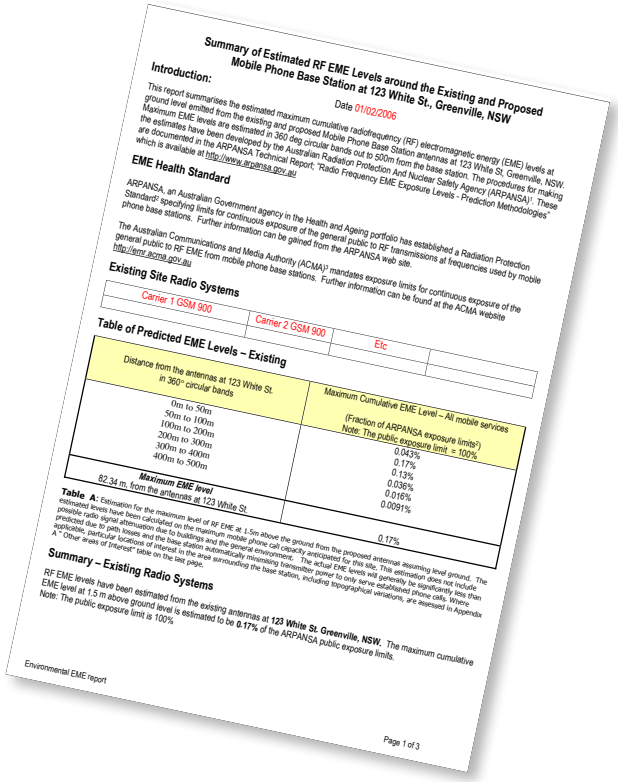
The new report is designed to ensure information about base stations and their emission levels is available to all interested stakeholders in a clear and easily understood format.

The new report will show estimates of the maximum levels of emissions within the 360 degree circular bands surrounding base stations, which is a significant change from the old reporting system which only required spot estimates within certain distances.

For example, instead of giving a spot value for emissions at 200m and 300m from the base of the tower or building, the new format now gives the highest estimates of EME found in any direction, and at any distance from 200m to 300m from the base of the tower or building.

The overall maximum emission level is also shown and the maximum cumulative emission level of all mobile phone services in the area as a percentage of the Australian safety limit.

The new report may also include estimated maximum levels at up to five selected areas of interests such as schools, hospitals and other sensitive locations that the community might be concerned about.



Summary of Estimated RF EME Levels around the Existing and Proposed Mobile Phone Base Station at 123 White St., Greenville, NSW

Introduction:

Date 01/02/2006

This report summarises the estimated maximum cumulative radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) levels at ground level emitted from the existing and proposed Mobile Phone Base Station antennas at 123 White St, Greenville, NSW. Maximum EME levels are estimated in 360 deg circular bands out to 500m from the base station. The procedures for making the estimates have been developed by the Australian Radiation Protection And Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)[1]. These are documented in the ARPANSA Technical Report: "Radio Frequency EME Exposure Levels - Prediction Methodologies" which is available at http://www.arpansa.gov.au

EME Health Standard

ARPANSA, an Australian Government agency in the Health and Ageing portfolio has established a Radiation Protection Standard[2] specifying limits for continuous exposure of the general public to RF transmissions at frequencies used by mobile phone base stations. Further information can be gained from the ARPANSA web site.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)[3] mandates exposure limits for continuous exposure of the general public to RF EME from mobile phone base stations. Further information can be found at the ACMA website http://emr.acma.gov.au

Existing Site Radio Systems

Carrier 1 GSM 900	Carrier 2 GSM 900	Etc

Table of Predicted EME Levels – Existing

Distance from the antennas at 123 White St. in 360° circular bands	Maximum Cumulative EME Level – All mobile services (Fraction of ARPANSA exposure limits[2]) Note: The public exposure limit = 100%
0m to 50m	0.043%
50m to 100m	0.17%
100m to 200m	0.13%
200m to 300m	0.036%
300m to 400m	0.016%
400m to 500m	0.0091%
Maximum EME level 82.34 m, from the antennas at 123 White St.	0.17%

Table A: Estimation for the maximum level of RF EME at 1.5m above the ground from the proposed antennas assuming level ground. The estimated levels have been calculated on the maximum mobile phone call capacity anticipated for this site. This estimation does not include predictive radio signal attenuation due to buildings and the general environment. The actual EME levels will generally be significantly less than predicted due to path losses and the base station automatically maintaining lower power to only serve established phone calls. Where applicable, particular locations of interest to the area surrounded the base station, including topographical variations, are assessed in Appendix A " Other areas of Interest" detailed on the last page.

Summary – Existing Radio Systems

RF EME levels have been estimated from the existing antennas at **123 White St. Greenville, NSW.** The maximum cumulative EME level at 1.5 m above ground level is estimated to be **0.17%** of the ARPANSA public exposure limits.

Note: The public exposure limit is 100%

Environmental EME report

Page 1 of 3

Continued next page

Mobile phone base stations emission reports now more detailed

Continued from previous page

Areas that are expected to have higher emission levels such as high rise buildings close to the base stations will also be included.

An overview of the new ARPANSA EME Report can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

It is expected that values given in the new report may be slightly different than those found in earlier emission reports, even for an identical installation, because instead of giving the value at a fixed point the report will now included the highest emission level found anywhere in the selected circular band, in any direction from the base station.

An explanation of the EME levels provided in the new report can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

The emission levels provided in the new report are maximum levels which will not be exceeded when the base station is operational. The maximum value assumes, for example, that all the planned transmitters are installed and are all operating at maximum power — i.e. nearly all mobile phone calls in the immediate area are connected to the base station and the customers are a long way from the base station. This rarely, if ever, occurs.

Some of the transmitters at a base station are only used when there are an increasing number of telephone calls actually in progress; otherwise they don't transmit. Even when a call is in progress, the power transmitted is adjusted to be only as high as necessary to communicate with the handset. If the handset is close, or in a good coverage area, the base station transmitter will reduce its power automatically.

The estimated levels provided also do not take into account trees, vegetation or buildings which may alter the EME levels, generally always decreasing them.

Actual measurements around base stations have shown values of EME are usually less than calculation by factors of 10 to 1000, or even more. Values of EME indoors will typically be even lower as walls, windows and roofs absorb or reflect the energy.

This was confirmed by ARPANSA in 2005 in research conducted on 60 towers across Australia. The researchers found that on average the exposure level was 5000 times below the Australian safety limit in locations where the levels were expected to be at their highest.

The new ARPANSA EME Report has been a mandatory requirement since 1 July 2007.

The Mobile Carriers Forum fact sheet on how to understand the new EME report can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

Seven steps for locating mobile phone base stations

Have you received notification about a proposed telecommunications facility in your municipality?

Want to know what the existing and proposed levels of radio frequency electromagnetic energy are from these facilities?

The Mobile Carriers Forum's Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA) can provide answers to your questions.

The MCF has developed seven easy steps to search for a telecommunications facility to provide more information about mobile phone base stations for the community and councils.

It is as easy as:

1. Go to the RFNSA using this web address:

WEBSITE LINK

2. Press the Guest Login Button
3. Search by typing the suburb name into the search box in the top right hand corner
4. Select the site from the list of sites in that suburb that appears by clicking on the site number
5. Click on the 'Reports' tab
6. Click on the 'Environmental EME Report' and open
7. The Table of Predicted/Existing EME Levels within the report shows levels (as a percentage of Australia's Radiation Protection Standard) from the Telecommunications Facility

If you have any queries about reading the 'Environmental EME Report', please submit your question on the MCF website:

WEBSITE LINK

Irish Government report declares mobile phone base stations safe

A specially formed expert group of the leading scientific researchers on electromagnetic fields have issued a comprehensive report for the Irish Government which found no adverse health effects from mobile phone base station emissions.

The 58 page report prepared for the Irish Government Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources was issued largely in response to public concerns over the siting of base stations in the community.

The report can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

Formed in 2005, the expert group considered advice received during consultation with activist groups, industry, government representatives, councils and health authorities. The expert group also conducted an in-depth scientific review of all the science relating to base station emissions.

The report found living or working in the proximity of a base station is not associated with an increased risk of developing an illness.

“So far no adverse short or long-term health effects have been found from exposure to the RF signals produced by mobile phones and base station transmitters. RF signals have not been found to cause cancer.”

Specifically on the topic of cancer, the report noted that several large population studies had not found any link between radio frequency (RF) transmitters of TV and radio broadcasts and cancer, even though RF exposures from these sources are much higher than from mobile phone base stations.

“Over the past 15 years, several epidemiological studies have examined the potential relationship between RF transmitters and cancer. These studies have as yet provided no evidence that RF exposure from the transmitters increases the risk of cancer.”

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Irish Government report declares mobile phone base stations safe

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It was of interest to the expert group to note that the stronger RF emissions from TV and FM transmitters had been in operation for 80 years with no association to adverse health effects.

The report also addressed the siting of base stations in proximity of sensitive locations and children. Contrary to the common misconception, the report notes the maximum RF intensity always occurs at some distance from the antennas, although even these levels are much too low to affect health.

"While there have been suggestions to locate phone masts away from places where children gather, or away from hospitals, it should be understood that for mobile phone networks to operate efficiently, a minimum level of signal strength is needed. This applies irrespective of the location of the phone mast.

"If phone masts are located in suboptimal positions, this results in higher RF signals from both the mast and mobile phones to compensate for this. The net result can be that people are subjected to higher RF exposures in these areas, although the levels are still safe."

The expert group, chaired by the former director of the World Health Organisation's EMF project Dr Michael Repacholi, made recommendations to the Irish Government for strict adherence to the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection's (ICNIRP) guidelines on exposure limits.

The group said the guidelines provide sound guidance on limiting exposures and science-based exposure limits that are applicable to both public and occupational exposure.

"The ICNIRP guidelines provide adequate protection for the public from any EMF sources. While the guidelines were published in 1998, they are constantly under review and still have appropriately protective limits.

"The guidelines are based on a weight of evidence review from all peer-reviewed scientific literature and not on the conclusions of any single scientific paper."

The report also recommends that national guidelines be agreed upon for the planning and approval process of new antennas and base station sites through a public consultative process.

The report can be downloaded from Irish Government's website:

WEBSITE LINK

SA Supreme Court says councils should not consider service need

In June the Full Court of the Supreme Court of South Australia released a landmark decision ruling councils should not consider a need for the service when concerning the tests to be applied in determining whether to grant consent for a mobile phone tower.

The Honourable Chief Justice Doyle dismissed the South Australian Development Assessment Commission's (DAC) appeal, siding with the original decision made by the South Australian Environment, Resources and Development Court.

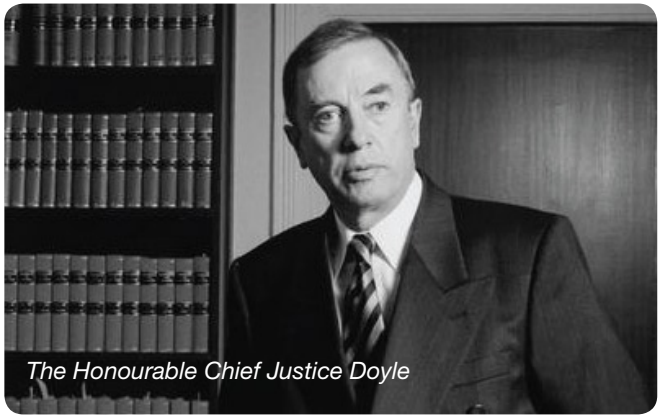
Justice Bleby and Justice Sulan both agreed with Chief Justice Doyle's ruling to grant approval to 3GIS, a partnership between Telstra and Hutchison, for its proposed mobile phone tower in Glenelg.

Justice Bleby ruled the Environment Court's decision should be upheld, finding the court correctly addressed the issues of community need, visual impact and possible alternative locations.

"It has not been demonstrated that the Court failed to take into account any relevant consideration or that it should have acted on other relevant considerations. There is no reason why those conclusions should be disturbed. For these reasons the Environment Court made no error of law, and it made no error of fact which would justify the granting of leave to appeal. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed," Justice Bleby said.

The ruling handed down by the Full Court of the Supreme Court of South Australia is available for download:

WEBSITE LINK



The Honourable Chief Justice Doyle

In its defence, the DAC contended that where a new mobile phone tower would be unsightly, it is necessary for the carrier to demonstrate a sufficient community demand for the services to be supplied by the tower such that the unsightliness of the tower is outweighed by the community interest in the supply of those services.

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SA Supreme Court says councils should not consider service need

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However, Justice Bleby ruled that a planning authority is not required to assess the value or need of the 3G services to be provided and that the Development Plan itself assumes there is a community demand which is identified in the process leading up to the creation of the Development Plan.

"The Environment Court was correct in holding that a planning authority was not required to assess the social utility of the 3G services provided by the respondent… The burden of establishing the relevant demand need will therefore fall on the carrier. Alternatively, it is the carrier and only the carrier who will be adversely affected if the burden is not discharged," Justice Bleby said.

The earlier ruling handed down by the Environment, Resources and Development Court in December 2006 is also available for download:

WEBSITE LINK

The Court's finding means the primary focus of future assessments of a proposed mobile telecommunication towers by a planning authority will be whether it is located and designed to minimise visual impact.

"The function of this part of the Development Plan is to ensure not only that the technological requirements for delivery of the service can be satisfied by a particular installation but that they can be satisfied in a way which minimises what are assumed to be adverse effects on the visual amenity of the locality. It is not a matter of balancing the facility need with the environmental effects and then deciding whether the facility should be installed," Justice Bleby said.

Mobile Carriers Forum Program Manager Matt Evans welcomed the decision, saying the industry is committed to providing a high quality service to Australia's 20 million users while also balancing the needs of the community.

"As an industry we will continue to focus our energies on improving the siting and visual appearance of towers and antennas deployed by mobile network carriers. We are committed to working with local Councils to strike a balance between provision of an essential service and impact on visual amenity," Mr Evans said.

"The community has high expectations that reliable mobile network services will be provided in a timely manner, and we will endeavour to provide this."

Cochlear gives base stations the tick of approval

Recent media reports in Geelong and Toowoomba sparked concern among residents and parents that living or working near a mobile phone base station may cause interference with their hearing equipment.

However, Cochlear, the worlds leading provider of hearing aid technology, continued to stand by its position that mobile phone base stations do not cause any problems for its hearing aids.

The company's most recent position statement on hearing aids and base stations states:

"The emitted energy of Mobile Phones transmitting towers is comparatively smaller especially when compared with a mobile phone directly over the ear. Up to date we do not have any confirmed and repeatable incidences of interference due to Base Station Antennas.


Antenna concerns
Grovedale parents
Tower
kinder
anger

'There are more than 10,000 base stations across Australia, located in dense urban metropolitan areas and remote rural locations, with not one reported incidence of interference with hearing aid users...'

"A cochlear implant user does not have to expect complications caused by base station antennas in the vicinity."

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association's CEO Chris Althaus supported Cochlear's position and noted that there have been no reported cases of interference between hearing aid users and mobile phone base stations.

"There are more than 10,000 base stations across Australia, located in dense urban metropolitan areas and remote rural locations, with not one reported incidence of interference with hearing aid users."

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Cochlear gives base stations the tick of approval

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Mr Althaus said the industry has worked closely with the Australian Communications and Media Authority, hearing aid manufacturers and Hearing Australia to address problems relating to possible interference.

“The industry’s effort to support hearing aid users has resulted in the availability of hearing aids with improved immunity to interference and a new immunity standard for hearing aids.”

Mr Althaus said the mobile phone industry adhered to strict guidelines on the design, operation and location of mobile phone base stations, which included a policy on hearing aid users.

“Mobile phone carriers are required to take a precautionary approach to the design and operation of base stations. All mobile phone base stations in Australia must be hearing aid friendly and comply with the Australian standard for hearing aid immunity,” Mr Althaus said.

‘Mobile phone carriers are required to take a precautionary approach to the design and operation of base stations. All mobile phone base stations in Australia must be hearing aid friendly and comply with the Australian standard for hearing aid immunity.’

New study to investigate exposure levels within homes

The Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research (ACRBR) announced a study to be conducted this year to measure the levels of electromagnetic fields within a selected group of Melbourne homes nominated by community groups.

Measurements will be recorded in a diverse selection of home environments and will include cordless and mobile phones, Wi-Fi devices, wireless LANs, Bluetooth, wireless remote controls and baby monitors. A summary of the research program is available on the ACRBR website:

WEBSITE LINK

The new study comes in the wake of a surge in the popularity of wireless devices, with concerns about the cumulative effects of such devices being used concurrently in the confines of homes.

Community groups have expressed concern that scientific research has been limited to tests of isolated devices, with speculation that levels in real world environments may in fact be higher due to the combination of a number of exposure sources.

However, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) Chief Executive Chris Althaus said the ACRBR study will measure all sources and provide cumulative results reflective of the levels in most typical urban communities.

“The Melbourne measurement study will be the first of its kind in Australia and will provide valuable insights into the cumulative levels within typical homes.”

Mr Althaus said health authorities had found no adverse health effects from the low-powered radio waves emitted by such devices.

“The World Health Organisation and several independent health authorities have released comprehensive reports showing no convincing scientific evidence of health effects from radiofrequency signals.”

Mr Althaus noted that the ACRBR study follows a US study which found no cause for concern.

“The largest study ever conducted on the safety of wireless networks, released in March 2007, found RF fields from wireless networks and Wi-Fi devices in real world conditions operate far below international exposure guidelines.”

Mr Althaus said Australian independent EME experts RadHaz Consulting confirmed the safety of Wi-Fi in a recent study which found emissions one metre from a Wi-Fi access point were on average 100,000 times below the Australian safety standard.

A fact sheet about Wi-Fi is available on AMTA’s website:

WEBSITE LINK

Results from the ACRBR home measurement study, funded by AMTA, will be released before the end of the year.

Bees dropping like flies–but base stations aren't the cause

The release of a German study in April caused widespread panic in agricultural circles over fears mobile phone base stations are behind the mass destruction of bee colonies in Europe and North America.

Media reports suggested radio frequency (RF) emissions from base stations are playing havoc with the navigational ability of bees, leading them away from their colonies.

However, the scientists who conducted the study have clarified their work, saying their research was not specifically related to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

"Our study was way before CCD and is not intended to claim the answer for that problem," said Stefan Kimmeltant, a research assistant involved in the project, to the Foster's Online newspaper.

"I cannot say anything about a link between radiation and CCD."

He said the study instead investigated how electromagnetic fields affected the learning ability of bees, which an earlier 2004 study from the group found no change in bee behaviour due to RF exposure.

Mr Kimmeltant also noted the study used cordless telephones and not mobile phones as was widely reported.

The Foster's Online article is available at:

WEBSITE LINK

Australian apiarists have so far been unaffected by CCD, but remain on alert for a potential outbreak. The Centre of International Economics issued a report in 2003 which estimated the direct economic cost to Australia at $1.7 billion a year if there was a complete loss of honeybee crop pollination.

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Bees dropping like flies—but base stations aren't the cause

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The scientific consensus on the cause of the decline in bee populations is focused on pesticides, mites and parasites, which have been known to impact bee behaviour for more than 20 years.

CSIRO entomology researcher Dr Denis Anderson strongly contests the notion that mobile phones or base stations are harming bees, and was quoted recently in *The Australian* newspaper saying CCD is likely to be related to a well known mite.

"I think Colony Collapse Disorder is more the second effect of pathogens or infections from the already detected Vorroa Destructor Mite."

Dr Doug Sommerville of the NSW Department of Primary Industry agrees, and told ABC's *7:30 Report* mobile phones are not a likely cause of CCD.

"I think it's grasping at straws to some degree. My view is, if it's mobile phones, then why aren't

we seeing some impacts in Australia? I think it's probably a combination of things. I think it's probably overuse of chemicals and probably a lot of stress."

The ABC *7:30 Report* provides a good explanation of CCD and is available to view at:

WEBSITE LINK

The issue of CCD is currently under investigation by a working group of the Mid Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium (MAAREC). An FAQ on CCD has been produced by the working group, which states mobile phones and base stations are not being investigated as a cause.

"Radiation transmitted by cell towers: The distribution of both affected and non-affected CCD apiaries does not make this a likely cause. Also cell phone service is not available in some areas where affected commercial apiaries are located in the west. For this reason, it is currently not a top priority."

For more information regarding CCD, see the MAAREC website:

WEBSITE LINK

ABC Toowong cluster report finds RF EMF as an unlikely cause

An independent panel of experts appointed to investigate a cluster of breast cancers among staff at the ABC's Brisbane television studio has delivered its final report, unable to explain the increased risk of the cancer.

The report found a real increase in the risk of breast cancer in woman working at the ABC Toowong site that was related to length of employment and may have been contributed to by some aspect of work or the working environment at Toowong.

The ABC media release can be viewed at:

WEBSITE LINK

However, the panel's thorough environmental investigation has cleared radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields (EMF) as a cause of the cluster.

'... the panel's thorough environmental investigation has cleared radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields (EMF) as a cause of the cluster.'

"It was highly unlikely that this increase was caused by exposure during work on the Toowong site to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields, ionising radiation or chemicals known or suspected to cause breast cancer."

ABC Toowong cluster report finds RF EMF as an unlikely cause

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The report also found little or no evidence to explain the increase in the women's sharing of known genetic or lifestyle risk factors for breast cancer.

"While we have not been able to find a cause for the increase in risk of breast cancer at the ABC Toowong, we believe that we have considered and excluded all plausible environmental explanations for such an increase," the report stated.

The expert panel, chaired by Sydney Cancer Centre research director Professor Bruce Armstrong, recommended the ABC conduct similar investigations among women at other studios around Australia.

Following the release of the final report, ABC Managing Director Mark Scott said the ABC had accepted the findings of the report and will implement the actions recommended.

'... the ABC had accepted the findings of the report and will implement the actions recommended.'

"We have also accepted the recommendation put forward by Professor Armstrong and the expert panel to conduct a study of breast cancer epidemiology of staff in other capital cities. This study will be conducted by The Cancer Council in New South Wales and we expect to see a proposal for the undertaking of this work shortly," Mr Scott said.

The independent expert panel's scientific report can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

Professor Bruce Armstrong, Sydney Cancer Centre research director

QLD one step closer to improved regulation of mobile network base stations

A statewide Assessment Code for the approval of mobile phone base stations is one step closer following the recent closure of public submissions to the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Department of State Development and Innovation is currently reviewing the proposed Code, which is anticipated to be incorporated into the latest revision of the Integrated Planning Act (IPA) in late 2007.

The Code is designed to standardise local government involvement in establishing new telecommunications facilities in land designated as commercial, industrial or rural.

However, the Code will still allow for councils to regulate new towers located in residential and some open space areas.

Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF) Program Manager Matt Evans said the Code would help provide a clear framework for both telecommunications carriers and local government to work within.

“It is beneficial for both local government and telecommunications carriers that the deployment of mobile network infrastructure across Queensland is completed through a standardised system of requirements for planning consent, which includes balancing the needs of the community,” Mr Evans said.

“The Queensland MCF is working with the Queensland Department of State Development in the lead up to the anticipated implementation of the Code. The MCF will be supporting the implementation of the Code

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QLD one step closer to improved regulation of mobile network base stations

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through the provision of training for the industry, local government planners and provision of advice to the State Government."

Mr Evans said the standardised Code would greatly improve the planning process and eliminate the need for councils to write their own telecommunications code.

"New mobile phone towers located in residential areas and some open space areas will still be impact assessable. Therefore, council will still be able to regulate these important land use categories. Under the IPA, councils will be required to consider the provisions of the Code even for those sites which are not controlled by the Code."

Mr Evans said the Code is part of the Queensland Government's Project Enable initiative, which is a program of the government to eliminate barriers and red tape across the state.

'... the standardised Code would greatly improve the planning process and eliminate the need for councils to write their own telecommunications code.'

More information about Project Enable is available here:

WEBSITE LINK

The Queensland Code follows the successful introduction and implementation of a similar state wide telecommunications Code in Victoria in 1999.

In Brief

Commerce Queensland report finds need for more infrastructure

Nearly one in four businesses in Queensland have delayed or deferred their growth and expansion plans as a consequence of delays in the delivery of key infrastructure in their region, according to the results of the March Commerce Queensland Survey of Business Conditions.

Commerce Queensland President, Beatrice Booth said, when asked which areas of inadequate infrastructure had the largest impact, nearly one in three respondents (32.69 per cent) said road transport access was a primary concern.

Inadequate telecommunications access was of concern for 19.23 per cent of respondents, with both mobile phone coverage and access to adequate broadband both a primary concern.

The survey is available on the Commerce Queensland website:

WEBSITE LINK

Senator Coonan commends Design & Innovation Taskforce

The Mobile Carriers Forum's (MCF) Design and Innovation Taskforce received Ministerial congratulations for its hard work the past six months on improving the visual outcomes of mobile network infrastructure.

In her speech at the 2007 AMTA Conference on 17 July, Federal Communications Minister Helen Coonan commended the MCF for pursuing a means to improve design outcomes for mobile network infrastructure.

Senator Coonan highlighted the aims of the project, which are to identify techniques and guidelines which can be applied to everyday mobile phone base station site design processes and assist telecommunications carriers to achieve better visual outcomes.

A transcript of Senator Coonan's speech is available online:

WEBSITE LINK

A 'Mobile Phone Base Station Design Guide' is being developed and will provide a structured process which can assist carriers to document and assess the landscape context of a proposed mobile phone base station.

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In Brief

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The project is nearing a conclusion and recommendations will be considered for implementation by the industry.

Working safely around base stations

The Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF) has developed a series of fact sheets designed to provide health and safety advice to workers on sites located near operating radiofrequency transmitting antennas (RF Sites).

The fact sheets are specifically related to RF workers, who may be mobile phone carrier personnel and contractors working on RF sites as part of carrier operations or workers involved in activities such as roof maintenance, window cleaning and façade maintenance. These fact sheets do not relate to general public health and safety.

The fact sheet series includes: RF Safety 1: About RF Safety and Health, RF Safety 2: About RF Transmitters and Who are RF Workers, RF Safety 3: I need to access a roof/structure as part of my work duties near Mobile Phone Carrier RF Transmitters, RF Safety 4: I am an RF Worker and I need access to a RF Site as part of Mobile Phone Carrier operations, RF Safety 5: What if I believe I have been over-exposed to RF.

The RF worker fact sheet series is available for download from the MCF website:

WEBSITE LINK

Danish study finds no increased cancer risk for electricity workers

People living and working near power lines can take heart from a new study that shows exposure to electromagnetic fields does not increase the risk of developing cancer.

Danish researchers examined the health and employment of more than 28, 224 workers at 99 electricity companies in Denmark between 1968 and 2002.

The data was linked to the Danish Cancer Registry, where the researchers conducted a comprehensive analysis of the data. The results showed no evidence of an increased risk of leukaemia, brain or breast cancers among workers exposed to any level of electromagnetic energy.

“The results do not support the hypothesis of an association between occupational exposure to magnetic fields in the electric utility industry and

In Brief

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risks for leukaemia, brain cancer and breast cancer," the study concluded.

The study, published in May 2007 in the journal of *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, can be viewed online:

WEBSITE LINK

Irish base station emission levels well below limits

The Irish Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has issued the first two of four reports in a programme to measure Non-Ionising Radiation at 130 mobile phone base station sites across the country during 2007.

The independently coordinated and funded programme involves measurements of emission levels at the point of highest exposure at base station facilities.

The first interim report can be downloaded from ComReg's website:

WEBSITE LINK

So far, 55 sites have been measure between April and July, with all measurements recorded well below the guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

The second interim report can also be downloaded from ComReg's website:

WEBSITE LINK

"The conclusion of the site measurements undertaken is that emission levels at all the sites measured fall significantly below the international ICNIRP general exposure levels. In some cases the levels are in fact less than one thousandth of the ICNIRP limits."

The fourth and final report will be issued in December 2007.

For your Diary

The Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research (ACRBR) is holding a Science Week, planned for 29 October. ACRBR, Australia's Centre for Excellence in EME research, will be holding a Science week at Swinburne University.

The week will involve a public education evening seminar, and a series of day workshops for health and safety, medical and researchers including an open day. Watch out for more details on:

WEBSITE LINK